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A-ONE #1717   05/01/15

    ~ Great Atari "Reboot"!   ~ People Are Talking!   ~ Trinity Gaming PC!
    ~ Woman Blasts Porn to PCs ~ Browser Market Changes ~ Minecraft Updated!
    ~ Twitter Abuse Crackdown! ~ Are You A Web Troll?   ~ When Trolls Attack!

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    ~ Windows Edge Replaces IE ~ Canucks Love Their Poop ~ Man "Kills" His PC!


                   -*  Global Cyber Threat Grows!  *-
                  -* Mozilla's New Security Limitations! *-
                 -* Google Launches Security Feature for Chrome *-




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->From the Editor's Keyboard              "Saying it like it is!"
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Apologies for last week's issue being a no-show, but we simply didn't
have enough content to make it worthwhile to put an issue out.  But,
we're back this week with some great stuff - more material that tends
to be on the less "serious" side of things for a change!

So, rather than dwell on last week, let's dive right into this week's
issue and have a laugh or three!

Until next time...




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->In This Week's Gaming Section  - 'Destiny' Creators Seek To Atone for Missteps
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  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""    Minecraft Updated On Consoles!
                                    Welcome to the Great Atari Reboot!
                                    And much more!



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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News   -  The Latest Gaming News!
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          'Destiny' Video Game Creators Seek To Atone for Missteps


The creators of "Destiny" are ready to unleash the wolves.

When the latest expansion to the hugely ambitious but frequently maligned
video game "Destiny" is released next month, it won't merely feature a
new social area, multiplayer mode and maps. "House of Wolves" will also
aim to right several wrongs as developer Bungie, publisher Activision and
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the sci-fi shooter's Guardian protagonists look to the future.

Despite its popularity, many players have become frustrated with the game's lack of content and unpredictable nature. "Destiny" randomly rewards players with new gear, guns and parts, similar to a role-playing title. Following the game's much-anticipated release last year, the designers have sought to tweak as much as possible without alienating fans.

Just how much have they changed?

"The short answer is everything," said multiplayer design lead Lars Bakken. "We put out the game we thought 'Destiny' would be, and then it took on a life of its own once it was in the wild. We probably touched every system in the game. We've already done so many enhancements to 'Destiny.' I can't even keep them straight in my head at this point."

Unlike similar sci-fi shooters, such as "Gears of War" and "Killzone," most of the gorgeously detailed worlds found in "Destiny" are persistent realms that can only be accessed online by players, who portray one of the gun-toting, super-powered Guardians that must defend the last city on Earth from oblivion. Simply put, it's "World of Warcraft" meets "Halo."

Critically, "Destiny" was met with mixed reviews when the shared-world shooter went online in September. The New York Times' Chris Sullentrop said it was "monotonous and poorly paced," while Lou Kesten of The Associated Press dubbed it "unimaginative." ''Destiny" currently has a 76 out of 100 rating on the review aggregator site Metacritic.com.

The so-so word of mouth didn't stop virtual sharpshooters from digging into "Destiny." It was the third best-selling retail game in the U.S. last year, behind "Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare" and "Madden NFL 15," according to industry tracker NPD Group. Activision said during a February earnings call that 16 million players have registered for the game.

Bungie should know a thing or two about sci-fi shooters. They created the original trilogy of "Halo" games. However, even they weren't prepared for how complicated "Destiny" had become or just how much time players would invest in it. Bungie was also caught off guard by data-miners, players who managed to unearth details embedded within the code.

The developers now regularly toss in phony bits to throw off the sleuths, but not before the data-miners were able to discover that the three-versus-three multiplayer mode called "Trials of Osiris," arguably the most substantial part of the "House of Wolves" expansion coming May 19, was originally slated to be a big part of the game from the outset.

"When we were getting close to launch, we knew we weren't going to have something that was compelling," said Bakken. "I had a conversation with some of the other leads, and we came to the conclusion that it just wasn't ready yet. The data was still there, but what 'Trials of Osiris' has become is very different than what it would have been."

Other updates coming to "Destiny" in "House of Wolves" include daily rewards for players who participate in "Crucible" multiplayer matches and free access to the new maps from "The Dark Below," the game's previous expansion, regardless whether players purchase "The Dark Below" or "House

of Wolves" for $19.99, or $34.99 for a bundle of both.

"They're going to be available for everybody as soon as 'House of Wolves' comes out," said Bakken. "That's our way of not only enriching the game and continually making the experience that people bought into last September better, but it also helps us to not continually fracture the matchmaking population going forward."

For the visionaries at Bungie, "House of Wolves" could very well redefine their "Destiny."

Minecraft Updated On Consoles, Alex Skin Added And More

Minecraft, the successful game developed by Mojang now available on a variety of formats, has received a new update on PlayStation 3, PlayStation 4, Xbox 360 and Xbox One.

The new update, which is available right now in all regions and all formats, comes with some new features and tweaks that will make the experience more enjoyable for both those who are just starting to play the game and those who have already put hours upon hours into the game.

The biggest new addition for all platforms is the Alex skin and some variations of it. Thanks to these addition, players will now have more options when creating characters, as the Alex skin and variations are added to the default skins. The new update also includes a trial for some extra skins inspired by one of the most popular TV Shows ever, The Simpsons. The Simpsons Skin Pack trial will allow players to try out the content inspired by the series created by Matt Groening before purchasing it. Xbox 360 and Xbox One users won t be able to get these skins, unfortunately, as they are only available on PlayStation consoles.

The tweaks and changes introduced by the new Minecraft 1.16 update don t end here. The new update changes music tracks played in Creative mode and on front-end menus to match Java version, brings forward change so that shrubs can be placed in flower pots and fixes an issue which stops the Steampunk Texture Pack from working in the PlayStation 3 version of the game. New achievements and music have also been added in the Xbox 360 version of the game.

Minecraft is now available on a variety of platforms, including iOS, Android, PlayStation 3, PlayStation 4, PlayStation Vita, Xbox 360, Xbox One and PC. The new update is also available right now on consoles so make sure to download away to enjoy the new Alex skin and and more.

CyberPower Trinity Gaming PC Looks More Like A Spaceship

We've seen our fair share of "eccentric" looking, to put it kindly, gaming PCs that cater to gamers that have equally unusual tastes in design. But we have to hand over the crown to CyberPower and its new Trinity PC. Throwing out almost every traditional PC design convention out the window, this gaming PC sports a unique structure and arrangement that is, to put it mildly, really out of this world. Eschewing the boxed

form of many computers, the Trinity gives justice to its name and is composed instead of three distinct "blades".

The design of the Trinity isn't completely based on a whim, though CyberPower does somewhat admit that it is also somewhat of a case study, and a very expensive case study at that. The purpose of this triple blade arrangement is to separate the three biggest heat-generating components of a PC into their own blade to facilitate better cooling and air flow as well as make it easier to switch them out without having to affect the others.

The "Performance Blade" houses the graphics card and it is large and long enough to accommodate even the gigantic NVIDIA GeForce GTX TITAN X or one of AMD's Radeon R9 series. CyberPower doesn't mention anything about SLI arrangements but notes that there is enough room to squeeze in some extra SSDs if needed. The "Storage Blade" does what it says and is large enough to fit 3 SSDs, 2 HDDs, and a slim optical drive if so desired. It actually also houses the full-sized ATX power supply that juices up all three blades. Last but definitely not the least, the "CPU Blade" fits a mini ITX motherboard that can support both Intel and AMD processors and have room for a maximum of 16 GB of DDR3 RAM. And to keep things even cooler, it can optional have 120 mm liquid cooling.

The Trinity is definitely an exercise in creativity and imagination, but fortunately its designers didn't keep their heads in the cloud too long to bother about resilience. The case of the tri-blade gaming PC is made of steel and weighs 10 lbs per blade, giving it both protection and stability. It's so stable that CyberPower claims you can prop it up on a flat surface on only a single blade, with the other two pointing upwards, though you'll probably want to play it safe and stand the whole setup on two blades instead.

There are three basic models of the Trinity gaming PC, each of which can still be configured to your liking. At the lowest is the Trinity 100 with an AMD A10-7700K, 8 GB of RAM, an NVIDIA GTX 750Ti, and a 120 GB + 1 TB SSD combo, all for $955. The Trinity 200 takes it up a notch with an Intel Core i5-4690K, 16 GB of RAM, an NVIDIA GTX 960, and a 240 GB SSD plus a 2 TB HDD. The price also goes higher at $1,339. Then there's the Trinity EXTREME, which is both extreme in specs and in its $1,795 price tag. This one houses an Intel Core i7-5820K, 16 GB of RAM, an NVIDIA GTX 970, and the same 240 GB SSD + 2 TB HDD setup. Shipping for all three models start on May 1.

UK Pre-Orders Take A Nosedive As Gamers Grow Wary

UK pre-order numbers have plummeted as gamers react to delays and high prices.

A report conducted by Ipsos MORI s GameTrack project on behalf of MCV found 20 percent of UK gamers are either pre-ordering fewer titles or not pre-ordering anything.

Nine percent of those asked responded saying they've cut back on pre-orders in the last year, while 11 percent haven't pre-ordered anything at all. Only five percent of those asked said they pre-ordered more games, while 49 percent never pre-ordered anyway. About 10 percent hadn't changed their pre-ordering habits, while the rest didn't know.

The data revealed the UK is the number one territory across Europe for pre-orders, so the news it's also seeing the sharpest decline is likely to concern publishers.

As for why a dip is happening, the biggest reasons are consumers spending money on other non-gaming items instead, and waiting for prices to come down. In fact, all of Europe is seeing a decline, with UK, France, Germany and Spain pre-orders dropping 12 percent, meaning 10.3 million gamers have stopped or reduced the number of titles they pre-order.

Pre-orders and, in particular, pre-order bonuses have come under intense scrutiny lately with publishers seeming to go to ever-more desperate routes to convince gamers to reserve copies in advance. Where once pre-ordering was done to guarantee yourself a copy on launch day, it's now done to save cash by netting extra content, as is the case with Goro in Mortal Kombat X. Despite these efforts, however, it seems gamers aren't taking the bait.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online   -   Online Users Growl & Purr!
  """""""""""""""""""""

                   Welcome to the Great Atari Reboot

Fred Chesnais has plenty of ideas about how to rebuild a once-great video game company. Among the most important to the chairman and CEO of Atari the gaming brand whose cartridges, consoles and classic titles dominated the industry more than 40 years ago before it slowly slid into irrelevance   is his belief that getting players to see you as cool again starts with this rule:

Don t do the obvious thing.

 There s no point in trying to compete against the big companies or in trying to do the next Call of Duty, says Chesnais, who bought Atari out of bankruptcy in 2013 and has been iterating a turnaround plan since then, which the company continues to pursue today.

 That s an uphill battle. The only thing you can do is try to think forward two, three and four years down the road   to try to catch the next wave, if you will.

That, for example, is why Chesnais says the company synonymous with retro classics like Pong and Asteroids isn t gearing its new releases mostly to teens or only focusing on a limited geography in an attempt to reinvent itself. Rather, Atari s top executive says he has a more expansive view of where he wants to take the company   admittedly, a company that s a shell of its former self, employing 12 people today compared to a staff that numbered in the thousands in Atari s heyday   and of how he wants to get there.

It involves things like releasing the LGBT-themed game Pridefest in the coming weeks, a social-sim game for tablets and mobile devices in which players will create and launch their own personalized pride parades in cities of their choosing. In the game, players will customize parade flotillas with decorations, in addition to keeping their town attractive and happy. To unlock new parade and festival supplies, as well as receiving other bonuses, players will solve a variety of challenges and complete quests.

It s a very colorful game, and it s part of our new DNA as a company of trying to push the envelope, Chesnais said, adding that the game should be out by June.

Meanwhile, the Atari comeback he lays out also entails expanding the brand to other markets around the world like Brazil, which Chesnais says is a very significant gaming market today in terms of revenue. (They love their games there.) And the plan also calls for taking a broader view of the player community, with Chesnais pointing to opportunities to expand the company s audience by gearing some titles toward non-traditional players, like those between the ages of 40 and 60.

A critic might dismiss Atari s plan as too scattershot to make a difference. But thinking big is the point for the Atari of today in fact, Chesnais doesn t even refer to it as a video game company so much as an interactive entertainment production company, to use his phrase.

We ve also started the launch of a casino platform in Europe, he says.

Teaming up with gaming technology company Pariplay, in the fall Atari announced the release of Atari Casino, a real-money gaming website including Atari-themed games across a variety of platforms.

In recent weeks, Atari also released Atari Fit for iOS and Android devices, a fitness app that offers workout plans and rewards users with coins that can be used to unlock classic Atari games Centipede, Pong and Super Breakout. The company also re-introduced its RollerCoaster Tycoon game last year, and in February Atari announced the upcoming release of Asteroids: Outpost for PC, a re-imagining of Atari s renowned 1979 arcade shooter.

We ve also licensed some of our IP to Hollywood, Chesnais says. Our vision is very simple. It s to keep expanding the brand in the entertainment space and on a worldwide scale.

It helps, of course, when yours is a brand that touches a deep undercurrent of nostalgia among gamers of a certain vintage. Indeed, Atari co-founder Nolan Bushnell tells BGR there was something special about Atari from the beginning, and that it still has a path toward relevancy today.

Anytime you have an iconic brand, that helps, said Bushnell, who sold Atari to Warner Communications in 1976 the first in a long and tortuously complicated chain of ownership that would result in the Atari that Chesnais leads today.

To the extent they do good engineering, good design they have every opportunity to be a good success. Will they be another Microsoft or Sony? Probably not. But they could easily be a Zynga, capturing good games with the right dynamics.

One thing that won t be part of the company s future, Chesnais says, is a console. But that s not to say Atari doesn t see a future in hardware. Not wanting to spill too much, Chesnais points to a device like the Apple Watch   it s not a console, but it is hardware along the lines of where Atari envisions its efforts possibly going.

 We re just trying to do the right thing for the brand, Chesnais says.
 We re making mistakes. We re trying to be very humble, trying and testing the market. We ve had a great success with RollerCoaster Tycoon, less success with other games. As long as we re humble and try to listen to the community and change things when they need to change   that s how we work. It just takes time, that s all.

        Nominees Announced for New World Video Game Hall of Fame

Fifteen video games that have engrossed gamers for untold hours were named finalists Tuesday for the new World Video Game Hall of Fame.

The list includes arcade trailblazers Pong and Space Invaders, smartphone favorites Angry Birds and Minecraft and an array of others for console and computer.

They are: Doom, FIFA Soccer, the Legend of Zelda, the Oregon Trail, Pac-Man, Pokemon, the Sims, Sonic the Hedgehog, Super Mario Bros., Tetris and World of Warcraft.

Only a handful will make up the hall of fame's inaugural class, to be chosen by an international selection committee of journalists, scholars and other video game experts.

The induction ceremony is scheduled for June 4 inside The Strong museum in Rochester, which also houses the National Toy Hall of Fame.

"The 15 finalists for the World Video Game Hall of Fame span decades, gaming platforms and geographies," said Jon-Paul Dyson, director of The Strong's International Center for the History of Electronic Games. "Whether it's the groundbreaking game Pong or a more recent viral sensation like Minecraft, all of these games have helped shape the way that people across the globe play and relate to one another."

To make it into the hall of fame, games must have icon status, prove to be more than a passing fad and leave a mark on other games or forms of entertainment, pop culture or society in general.

The Strong said it received thousands of nominations since February, when it announced creation of the video game hall to recognize the impact of electronic games through the years. Anyone can nominate a game online.

The Strong's electronic games center has more than 55,000 video games and related artifacts in its collection, along with personal papers and corporate records that document the history of video games.

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Pentagon Says Evicted Russian Hackers, Global Cyber Threat Grows

The United States on Thursday disclosed a cyber intrusion this year by Russian hackers who accessed an unclassified U.S. military network, in a episode Defense Secretary Ash Carter said showed the growing threat and the improving U.S. ability to respond.

Carter cited the newly declassified incident during an address at Stanford University, in which he also warned the Pentagon was ready to help defend America's networks and to use cyber weaponry, if needed.

The doctrine was articulated in a new Pentagon cyber strategy unveiled on Thursday. Reuters obtained a copy on Wednesday.

"Adversaries should know that our preference for deterrence and our defensive posture don't diminish our willingness to use cyber options if necessary," Carter said in prepared remarks.

Carter said that sensors guarding the Pentagon's unclassified networks detected the intrusion by Russian hackers, who discovered an old vulnerability that had not been patched.

"While it's worrisome they achieved some unauthorized access to our unclassified network, we quickly identified the compromise and had a crack team of incident responders hunting the intruders within 24 hours," Carter said.

"After learning valuable information about their tactics, we analyzed their network activity, associated it with Russia, and then quickly kicked them off the network, in a way that minimized their chances of returning," he added.

The Pentagon's new cyber strategy document singles out Russia and China, saying both had developed advanced cyber capabilities and strategies.

"Russian actors are stealthy in their cyber tradecraft and their intentions are sometimes difficult to discern," the strategy document said.

Iran and North Korea had "less developed cyber capabilities" but overt hostile intent toward U.S. interests, it said.

On Thursday, Carter stressed the U.S. military needed closer cooperation with California's Silicon Valley, particularly after high-profile attacks on companies like Sony Pictures Entertainment.

"As tech companies see every day, the cyber threat against U.S. interests is increasing in severity and sophistication," he said. "While the North Korean cyberattack on Sony was the most destructive on a U.S. entity so far, this threat affects us all."

Carter's trip to Stanford, in the heart of Silicon Valley, is the latest

example of the U.S. government's efforts to improve relationships with tech companies after damaging revelations over digital surveillance by former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden.

Carter acknowledged part of his job will be overcoming those concerns.

"There are also really great opportunities to be seized through a new level of partnership between the Pentagon and Silicon Valley," he said.

Twitter Clamps Down on Abuse With Vow To Ban Anyone Who 'Promotes Violence Against Others'

Twitter has vowed to tackle online abuse with a promise to ban trolls who bombard other users with violent threats.

It has released a new set of guidelines designed to make the network less anti-social.

Shreyas Doshi, director of product management, said: "We believe that users must feel safe on Twitter in order to fully express themselves and we need to ensure that voices are not silenced because people are afraid to speak up.

"To that end, we are today announcing our latest product and policy updates that will help us in continuing to develop a platform on which users can safely engage with the world at large."

Doshi announced a number of policy changes designed to make the Twittersphere a happier place.

Firstly, it has banned threats of violence against others or promoting violence against others.

This toughens up on a previous policy which only prohibited "direct, specific" threats to harm other people, which Doshi described as "unduly narrow".

The social network now has the ability to lock abusive accounts for a period of time.

"This option gives us leverage in a variety of contexts, particularly where multiple users begin harassing a particular person or group of people," Doshi wrote.

Twitter will also begin identifying abusive tweets and then making sure they don't reach people who might be threatened by them - even if the tweet is popular or written by a well-known person.

A dedicated safety team will keep an eye on new accounts, to make sure they aren't started up with the specific intention of throwing out abuse.

This will be useful in dealing with extremists including ISIS supporters, who are often banned and simply reappear with new accounts.

Twitter Expands Privacy on Direct Messages

Twitter said Monday it was making it easier to take direct messages private, carving out a bigger space for targeted exchanges on the popular microblogging service.

Previously, direct messaging could only occur between two Twitter users "following" each other, which basically allowed both parties to see whatever they posted publicly.

As of Monday, a user can change the settings on his accounts to allow receipt of a direct message from anyone, including those who do not follow the user. In turn, the user can reply with a direct message to the sender, regardless of whether the sender follows the user, Twitter announced in a blog on its website.

Users who opt in can still take steps to block unwanted direct messages from a specific sender.

"We hope these changes help you connect more easily - and directly - on Twitter with the people, causes and businesses you care about most," Twitter said.

At the end of 2014, Twitter had 288 million monthly active users, sending 500 million tweets per day, according to the San Francisco-based company.

Mozilla To Limit New Firefox Features to Secure Sites

Mozilla is leading the charge for Web encryption.

The Firefox maker on Thursday announced a plan to favor websites that enable HTTPS.

"There's a pretty broad agreement that HTTPS is the way forward," Richard Barnes, Firefox Security Lead, wrote in a blog post, citing statements of support from IETF, IAB, W3C, and the U.S. government.

Eventually, Mozilla wants to make new Firefox features available to encrypted websites only. Then, it wants to phase out access to certain existing browser features to non-secure sites.

That, of course, will require some coordination. According to Barnes, the community must first agree on a date, after which all new features will be available only to secure websites. They will also need to decide what qualifies as a "new" feature.

"For example, one definition of 'new' could be 'features that cannot be polyfilled,'" Barnes wrote. "That would allow things like CSS and other rendering features to still be used by insecure websites, since the page can draw effects on its own. But it would still restrict qualitatively new features, such as access to new hardware capabilities."

Once those elements are in place, Mozilla will gradually phase out access to browser features for non-secure websites. A move which, Barnes pointed out, will likely cause some sites to break.

"So we will have to monitor the degree of breakage and balance it with

the security benefit," he said.

The company is also considering "softer limitations" to be overlaid onto functions when used by non-secure pages, like Firefox already does for camera and microphone access.

Mozilla is also considering limiting the scope of non-secure cookies.

"Since the goal of this effort is to send a message to the Web developer community that they need to be secure, our work here will be most effective if coordinated across the Web community," Barnes wrote. "We expect to be making some proposals to the W3C WebAppSec Working Group soon."

The move comes shortly after the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) last month complained that "dozens" of government tiplines are insecure.

Google Launches Security Feature for Chrome Web Browser

Google Inc on Wednesday announced a free extension for its Chrome web browser that better protects Google accounts, including email, against online attackers trying to steal passwords and other personal information.

The extension, called Password Alert, can be downloaded on Google Chrome and warns users before they enter account information on "phishing" pages, or imitation sites designed to steal passwords and access personal information, such as emails or online bank accounts.

Millions of phishing emails and websites are sent every day, Google said. Nearly 2 percent of messages sent through Gmail, Google's email service, are designed to steal passwords.

"Right now, it's left up to the user to decide whether or not to enter their password," said Drew Hintz, the lead engineer for Password Alert. "We expect users to know the difference between these sites, and that's an unreasonable request to make of users."

The new extension, which took about three years to create, is an addition to Google's other security measures, including safe browsing technology that warns users against potentially malicious sites and verification tools that help protect private accounts.

8 Sure Signs You re an Internet Troll

They re the scourge of the Internet, as common as cockroaches and even harder to exterminate. They re Internet trolls, and they live to make the rest of us miserable.

The good news? Academics at Stanford and Cornell believe they ve found a way to quickly identify trolls. The researchers examined comments at three popular, heavily moderated websites CNN, IGN, and Breitbart to determine characteristics that are common among users who were eventually banned because of the vile things they said. The idea is to

come up with an automated method for banishing trolls so the rest of us can have a civil conversation for a change.

Their study, titled Antisocial Behavior in Online Discussion Communities, is filled with charts, acronyms, and academic-speak. So we took the trouble of translating its key findings into eight simple rules you can use to identify whether you are a troll.

Note: The study uses the terms Future Banned Users   for people whose noxious behavior eventually led to their being banished   and Non Banned Users (everyone else). For clarity, we ve substituted the terms troll and nontroll. You re welcome.

How do you know if you re an Internet troll?

1. You post all the friggin time.

Per the study: Trolls tend to post more frequently than average users (prior to getting banned): on CNN, a typical [troll] makes 264 posts, but an average user makes only 22 posts.

Translation: Your keyboard runneth over. Please stop.

2. But almost never on topic.

 We find that the average text similarity of posts written by [trolls] is significantly lower than that of [nontrolls]   suggesting that [trolls] make less of an effort to integrate or stay on-topic.

Translation: Every discussion, no matter how innocuous, is an opportunity to launch into a paranoid rant about Obama, Bush, the 9/11 commission, the alleged moon landing, the Holocaust, Benghazi, the World Bank, the Bermuda Triangle, or the Infield Fly Rule.

3. You get way more replies than average.

Trolls receive more replies than average users, suggesting that they might be successful in luring others into fruitless, time-consuming discussions.

Translation: You have no life.

4. You re quasi-literate.

 We measure each post with respect to several readability tests, including the Automated Readability Index (ARI), which are designed to gauge how understandable a piece of text is. While posts written by [trolls] and [nontrolls] have similar word counts, those written by [trolls] have a higher ARI, and thus appear to be less readable than those written by [nontrolls].

Translation: Ewe dun no how too rat gud, dew ewe?

5. You re a $@#&%!! potty mouth.

 [Trolls] are less likely to use positive words   are also more likely to swear or use less tentative or conciliatory language.

Translation: You probably shouldn t kiss your mama with that mouth   or anyone else.

6. Your comments get worse over time.

 Not only do [trolls] enter a community writing worse posts than [nontrolls], but the quality of their posts also worsens more over time.

Translation: You enter the discussion as an idiot; you leave it a drooling imbecile.

7. And get deleted more often.

 On average, the deletion rate of a [troll s] posts tends to increase over their life in a community. In contrast, the deletion rate for [nontrolls] remains relatively constant.   Posts written later in a [troll s] life are more likely to be deleted, regardless of whether they are actually worse.

Translation: We re all effin tired of your BS.

8. But at least you re consistent.

 We can predict with over 80% [confidence] whether a user will be subsequently banned. In fact, we only need to observe 5 to 10 user s posts before a classifier is able to make a reliable prediction. Further, crossdomain classification performance remains high, suggesting that the features indicative of antisocial behavior that we discover are not community-specific.

Translation: If you re a jackass here, you re probably a jackass everywhere, and more likely to be banned. But not to worry: We re sure you ll find another virtual bridge to lurk under.

When Trolls Attack: 6 Things You Can Do to Protect Yourself

As anyone who s ever participated in an online discussion knows, it s getting really ugly out there. Web trolls   Golem-like creatures whose sole aim in life is to obliterate civil conversation as we know it   are taking over the Internet.

In February 2014, researchers at the University of Manitoba published the results of a study of roughly 400 U.S. adults who are active online. Nearly 6 percent identified themselves as trolls. (Other surveys have put the number as high as 28 percent.) The researchers also found a high correlation between online trolls and people who exhibit signs of sadism. Anyone surprised by that?

If the low percentage is accurate, it still puts the number of trolls in the U.S. at more than 10 million. Little wonder then that some large Web sites, like Popular Science, have abandoned their commenting systems, and celebrities like Lena Dunham, Iggy Azalea, and Louis C.K. have recently left Twitter.

I recently got a taste of this myself when I posted a story about a crowdfunding campaign for Memories Pizza, the Indiana restaurant at the center of a fight over gay rights and religious freedom laws. Before my story even appeared, I was bombarded with nasty tweets, egged on by the

conservative talk-show hosts who had created the campaign. It quickly mushroomed into a conspiracy theory that I was trying to root out the personal information of anonymous donors to that campaign.

For the record: I was not. Why would I care?

I got off easy. All I had to do was endure about a week of taunting, insults, and veiled threats on Twitter and Facebook. Others have had it far worse. A reporter for a local TV news station in Virginia questioned the legitimacy of the campaign on Twitter and was bombarded with more than 35,000 angry and sometimes violent tweets, many of them calling for the station to fire her. The women targeted by the Gamergate trolls on Twitter last fall had to vacate their homes due to physical threats. Then there are the tragic stories of teenagers who committed suicide after being cyberbullied.

But being in the crosshairs for a brief time was illuminating, to say the least. And it posed a difficult question: What exactly are you supposed to do when total strangers attack you online?

Being the target of a Twitstorm or a comments war is like fighting a swarm of gnats the size of an aircraft carrier. Swatting at one just sends the rest of them into a frenzy. The normal rules of polite discourse won t get you anywhere, but neither will lashing out. There s no easy solution, but there are ways to deal with it.

1. Issue a mea culpa. Let s say you did or said something stupid online and it went viral. Own it, apologize quickly, and move on. This won t stop the trolls from attacking you   it will just give them something else to attack you about   but it will earn credibility with anyone reasonable who might be watching, like your employer, co-workers, or customers.

2. Correct the record. If your attackers are spreading falsehoods about you   and it s almost certain they will, given enough time   you need to point out the facts of the matter as clearly and coolly as possible. Post it to your blog, Facebook page, or Twitter account, and point people to the corrected record. Again, you re doing this for the reasonable people in the audience, who (hopefully) are the ones who can impact your life in a meaningful way.

3. Don t argue, even if you re right. Trolls live to fight. The thing they want most of all is for you to fight back on their terms. One of my favorite sayings comes in handy here. Never pick a fight with a drunk, an imbecile, or a lunatic   after two minutes nobody else will be able to tell you apart. Don t let strangers mistake you for a drunk, an idiot, or a crazy person.

4. Gather your allies. You don t have to go it alone. Unless you did or said something so stupid even your friends are hiding, ask your supporters to weigh in on your behalf. Just make sure they apply the same rules: Patiently explain the facts, like you re talking to a 4-year-old, and be prepared to get angry, semiliterate responses on social media.

5. Report the jerks. There s reasonable disagreement, and then there s harassment, abuse, and threats. If someone crosses the line into the latter, or exposes your personal information in the hope that others will, don t ignore it   report them to the abuse department at the site where they did it. If they threaten violence, contact local law

enforcement.

6. Deploy the rope-a-dope. Once you ve apologized and/or corrected the
record, sometimes the only option you have left is to sit there and take
it until your opponents punch themselves out. Fortunately, they also
tend to have the attention spans of gnats and will eventually move on to
another target.

In response to the alarming spike in online trolling, Twitter and
Facebook have improved their abuse reporting tools   slightly. They re
far from satisfying, but they re better than no tools at all.

If someone sends you a nasty message via Facebook, you can click the
settings icon in the top right corner of the message (it looks like a
gear) and select Report spam or abuse from the drop-down menu.

In the next dialog, select Report conversation participants for
harassing or threatening me and click OK. Click Close in the next
window. Presumably, Facebook will then investigate the user for possible
violations of its terms of service.

Facebook has more instructions on how to report nasty posts to your
timeline, comments, photos, and the like.

On Twitter, you click the three dots on the bottom right-hand side of the
offensive tweet and decide whether you want to mute that account (so you
never again see what they post), block them (so they can t see your
tweets either), or report them so Twitter can investigate further.

If you select Report, Twitter takes you through a series of dialogs
where you identify why you ve flagged the tweet, how it s abusive or
harmful, whether it s targeting you or someone else, whether they re
merely being offensive or threatening physical harm, and what you want to
do about it. (Twitter offers more info on how to report violations here.)

I reported around a dozen Twits who were insulting and harassing me and
two who threatened me. Twitter support determined that one of those two
had not violated its terms; it briefly locked the other account,
pending corrective actions. Here s the email Twitter sent me:

Later that day, that account was back online and spewing vitriol again.
It appears the only corrective action required by Twitter was to make
him/her/it delete the offensive tweet directed at me. It did, however,
permanently block that account from ever seeing what I post to Twitter,
and vice versa.

Since then, Twitter has updated its policies about how it responds to
abusive tweeters. So hopefully future reports will result in stronger
measures and maybe a few banishments.

The good news is that blocking this person means I never have to see that
hateful stuff again. One troll down, 10 million more to go.

        Microsoft Edge Is Windows 10 s Internet Explorer Replacement

Say goodbye to Microsoft Internet Explorer and hello to Microsoft Edge.

Shown off at the annual Microsoft Build developer conference, the Edge browser will be available for Windows 10 when it is released this summer.

Edge is designed to take on Google s Chrome, Apple s Safari, and Mozilla s Firefox and to once again make Microsoft the king of Web browsers.

We saw and even used Edge before when it was called Project Spartan, but this is the first time Microsoft has divulged the browser s official name.

Edge isn t just some Internet Explorer knockoff. The browser is a completely new piece of software and comes with a host of new features.

In addition to its name, Microsoft also debuted a new tab page for Edge.

Joe Belfiore, a corporate vice president in Microsoft s Operating Systems Group, said that Internet Explorer s new tab page, the page you see when you open a new tab in the browser, is opened 1 billion times a day, so Microsoft wanted to help people get the most out of Edge s new tab page.

When you open a new tab, you re met with a universal search bar that lets you perform a search using Microsoft s Bing or enter a Web address. Below that is a list of your most visited websites.

If there is an app for one of your top sites, you see a Get the app button that takes you to the Microsoft Store, where you can download it.

Under that is a collection of news stories from various sources, and to the right is a Featured apps list for downloading. At the far right of the page is a list of some of your favorite information from Microsoft s personal assistant Cortana, Microsoft s answer to Apple s Siri and Google Now.

Like Google s Chrome and Mozilla s Firefox, Edge supports browser plug-ins. But rather than making developers create the plug-ins from scratch, Edge will support plug-ins from Chrome and Mozilla with just a few modifications, making it easier for developers to bring their existing extensions over.

We previously talked about some of the more interesting features coming to Edge, such as the ability to annotate webpages by writing directly on them with a stylus, as well as a reader mode that cuts extraneous information from a webpage.

Cortana also works with Edge s search feature. So if you have an upcoming flight, and you search for your airline, Cortana will automatically pull up your flight information in a separate browser pop-up box.

Edge is a massive departure from Internet Explorer in both form and function, and from what we ve seen, it s an extremely promising browser.

As Belfiore said during his presentation, The E button in the [Windows] task bar now has a completely different and better meaning than it has for a while.

Chrome Passes 25% Market Share, IE and Firefox Slip

In April 2015, we saw the naming of Microsoft Edge, the release of Chrome 42, and the first full month of Firefox 37 availability. Now we re learning that Google s browser has finally passed the 25 percent market share mark.

Between March and April, here is how the browser market changed, according to the latest figures from Net Applications:

Internet Explorer: down 0.71 points to 55.83 percent
Chrome: up 0.69 points to 25.68 percent
Firefox: down 0.19 points to 11.70 percent
Safari: up 0.12 points to 5.12
Opera: up 0.05 points to 0.48 percent

Breaking the IE figure down further shows good news for Microsoft s browser: The latest version, IE11, grew 0.82 percentage points back over the 25 percent mark. IE10 and IE9 both slipped a bit (0.17 and 0.21 percentage points respectively), while IE8 fell a solid 1.26 percentage points.

In October, IE11 managed to pass IE8 to become the world s most popular browser, and the gap continues to widen. This new trend became possible when Windows XP, whose users can t upgrade past IE8, started to lose significant share. As a result, IE11 can grow unchallenged, until, of course, Edge arrives.

Among the really old versions, IE7 gained just 0.03 points to 0.37 percent and IE6 fell 0.06 points to 0.92 percent.

Google s Chrome gained 0.69 percentage points this past month, and for the first time has passed the 25 percent mark. In other words, one in four Web users now use Chrome.

Chrome 42 captured 7.69 percent, Chrome 41 slipped 1.80 percent, and Chrome 40 fell 5.56 points. Older versions will continue to plummet as the latest version takes over, as is typical with Google s numbers.

As we ve noted before, Mozilla s Firefox has been hitting new lows for months. The browser hit a new low of 11.6 percent in February, and it s back down very close to that figure once again.

Thankfully, Firefox s built-in upgrade system continues to work well. Firefox 37 grabbed 6.12 points to hit 6.45 percent, while Firefox 36 dropped 5.24 percentage points and Firefox 35 fell 1.21 percentage points.

Net Applications uses data captured from 160 million unique visitors each month by monitoring some 40,000 websites for its clients. This means it measures user market share.

Solitaire Is Coming Back on Windows 10

The much-loved card game will once again be just a few clicks away when Microsoft's next OS launches this summer.

Awesome news for bored people everywhere: Solitaire is about to make a

huge comeback on Windows 10.

The much-loved card game will once again be just a few clicks away when Microsoft's next OS launches this summer. As The Verge first reported, Redmond is planning to   once again   make Solitaire a built-in game on Windows 10.

This means you'll no longer have to go through the trouble of separately downloading it like you need to do on Windows 8. Microsoft previously admitted that Solitaire, along with Minesweeper and Hearts, have a "devoted following," but decided not to pre-install them on Windows 8.

Windows 10 also marks the return of the beloved Start menu, so it looks like Microsoft is really embracing its roots with this OS. Here's hoping Microsoft decides to bring back Minesweeper and Hearts as well. At this point, it looks like you'll still have to search for them online and install them separately.

Meanwhile, Microsoft this week released another version of the Windows 10 technical preview that adds new Mail and Calendar apps. The new build also includes improvements to the Start, Taskbar, and Action Center, Continuum, Task View, and Virtual Desktop.

Windows traditionalists will also be happy to hear that the power button has been moved from the top-right of the screen back to the bottom left.

Microsoft has yet to announce an official launch date for its next-gen OS, but its partner AMD may have let the cat out of the bag earlier this week. During a first-quarter earnings call, AMD CEO Lisa Su let slip that the OS is slated for an "end of July" debut.

Canadians Top The World in Smiling Poop Emoji Use

Canadians are the biggest smiling poop emoji fans in the world, according to an international report on emoji use by country.

A new report on the popularity of specific emojis by country reveals that Canadians may not be quite as polite as our reputation suggests.

In fact, we're twice as likely to use "raunchy" emojis in personal communications than residents of any other country   and our rates of "violent" emoji usage are the highest in the entire world, at more than double the average.

We also like the smiling poop emoji. A lot.

Popular among smartphone users worldwide, the "smiling poop emoji" has inspired everything from housewares and jewelery to lengthy thinkpieces about its origin in recent years. (emojidictionary.com)

These are but a few of the insights gleaned from a comprehensive international mobile language report published on Tuesday by SwiftKey, a British technology
irm that develops smartphone keyboard software.

In its 18 page "emoji report," SwiftKey analyzed more than one billion pieces of emoji data from 16 different regions and languages across the

world sent between October 2014 and January 2015.

Researchers broke the more than 800 emojis available on the Unicode standard keyboard into 60 different categories and then analyzed rates of use to determine "language leaders" for each category.

The report's "findings of note" section indicates that when it comes to romance, French speakers lead the pack by using four times as many heart emojis as speakers of any other language.

Australians were found to use the most alcohol and drug emojis, Arabic speakers love flowers and plants, and Americans hold the top spot in a "random assortment of emoji & categories, including skulls, birthday cake, fire, tech, LGBT, meat and female-oriented emoji."

According to Canadian emoji use, ours is the land of guns, eggplants and smiling poop.

"Canada scores highest for interests some might consider more 'American', including guns & violent emoji (1.52% vs .97% avg), money (.47% vs .25% avg) and raunchy humour (.28% vs .14% avg)," the report reads.

Under the "raunchy" category, SwiftKey lists such emojis as banana, raised fist, eggplant, peach, cherries and the Cancer astrological symbol.

Canada uses the poop, gun and money emojis more than any other English-speaking country analyzed for SwiftKey's newly-released "emoji report."

Canadian English speakers are also the "most violent in their emoji usage (1.52%), which is more than 50% higher than the average" and partial to gun, knife, punching fist, fire, explosion, skull and bomb emojis according to the report.

Judging by the internet's reaction, however, SwiftKey's most significant finding relates to the infamous "smiling pile of poop" emoji.

"Funny emoji (farts and poop) are used by Malaysian speakers at nearly double the average rate," the report notes, though "most of Malay's win comes from the fart emoji... Canadians use the poop emoji most."

SwiftKey provides no hypothesis as to why this may be, but reaction to the news on Twitter shows that many Canadians do indeed love the poop emoji and are proud to be leading the world in this area.

Colorado Man Cited for 'Killing' Uncooperative Computer With Handgun

Police in Colorado have cited a 37-year-old man for carrying his computer into an alley then shooting it eight times with a handgun after what authorities said had been a long battle with the uncooperative machine.

Lucas Hinch was cited for discharging a firearm within city limits after officers responded to a "shots fired" call early on Monday evening, the Colorado Springs Police Department said in a statement.

"Investigation revealed a resident was fed up with fighting his computer for the last several months," said the statement, entitled "Man Kills His

Computer."

"He took the computer into the back alley and fired eight shots into the computer with a handgun, effectively disabling it," it added.

The Colorado Springs Gazette newspaper cited police as saying Hinch was good-natured about the citation, and that he told officers he had not realized he was breaking the law.

A judge will decide what penalty the citation carries.

Canadian Woman Blasts Porn to Neighbors' PCs

It probably goes without saying that hacking can land you in jail, but it can do so even if you don t steal a single dollar. This is a lesson that ValØrie Gignac, a Quebecoise hacker, learned recently. Mounties arrested her and took her into custody after they became aware that she hosted her own botnet for the explicit purpose of messing with her neighbors via eavesdropping, talking through their speakers and exposing their children to extreme pornography.

Canadian news organization CBC News reported on the story, which the Royal Canadian Mounted Police first made public. Gignac belongs to a popular hacking forum (neither source would reveal which one, although it has approximately 35,000 members), and used remote-access Trojans (RATs) to hijack neighbors computers. From there, antagonizing their owners was as simple as keeping an eye on their activities and picking her poison.

The police allege that Gignac used RATs to infect her victims computers, although they incorrectly identify the software as Remote Administration Tools. In actuality, remote administration tools can be totally legitimate, like desktop-sharing in Microsoft Windows. If Gignac misused legitimate software rather than used malware as advertised, it could change the case against her considerably.

After Mounties took her into custody, Gignac was released on bail, but with the provision that she could not access a computer or the Internet for the time being. Her court case is ongoing, but she is being charged with four counts of unauthorized use of a computer and misuse of data. Interestingly, Gignac s supposed wrongdoing was not ongoing, but seemingly relegated to a four-day span back in 2012.

Since Gignac did not seek any financial gain from her endeavors, her lawyer has pitched the entire incident as a bad prank, which is likely true. Hackers are notorious for tampering with the status quo just for the heck of it, or for the lulz, as a popular meme says.

Still, the law is the law, and the victims of Gignac s pranks had every right to bring legal action against her. Whether mild intrusions like this really warrant jailing a woman is something that legal scholars will likely have a field day discussing in the near future.

If you want to keep yourself safe from unwanted interference from mischievous neighbors, the protocol is the same as keeping yourself safe online in general. Run a good antivirus program, password-protect your computer and router, and don t install suspicious programs.

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